

Comprehension Check

A. Write *True* or *False* before each sentence below. If the sentence is false, change it to a true sentence. Write the new sentence on the lines after the false one.

_____ 1. There are more senators than representatives in Congress.

_____ 2. The leader of the House is the Speaker of the House. The leader of the Senate is the Speaker of the Senate.

_____ 3. Committees in Congress study the country's problems.

_____ 4. Only Congress has the power to declare war.

_____ 5. States have the power to print their own money.

_____ 6. The elastic clause gives Congress powers that are not named in the Constitution.

B. Look at your answers above. Why do you think Congress was given these powers and responsibilities? Write your answer on a separate sheet of paper.

Words to Know

A. Vocabulary words and their definitions are given in the list below. However, the definitions are next to the wrong words. Write the correct definitions on the lines. Use a separate sheet of paper if you need more room.

1. **bill:** a group of representatives and senators in Congress who meets to learn about problems and to solve them
2. **standing committee:** the people of a particular district or state who elect a person to public office
3. **session:** an idea for a new law that is written and voted on
4. **senator:** a member of the House of Representatives
5. **majority:** a committee in the House and Senate that studies the same kinds of problems year after year
6. **constituents:** a meeting of Congress that begins in January each year
7. **committee:** a member of the Senate
8. **representative:** more than half

1. **bill:** _____
2. **standing committee:** _____
3. **session:** _____
4. **senator:** _____
5. **majority:** _____
6. **constituents:** _____
7. **committee:** _____
8. **representative:** _____

B. Choose two of the vocabulary words from the list above. Use each of the words in a sentence. Use a separate sheet of paper if you need more room.

Critical Thinking

- A. Read the paragraphs below. Use the information to answer the questions that follow.**

A political party is a group of people who have or want control in government. There are two major parties in the United States. They are the Republican party and the Democratic party.

Each party wants a majority in Congress. If a party has a majority of seats in Congress, it has a better chance of getting its bills passed into law.

During the 102nd session of Congress (1991–1993), the United States Senate had 56 Democrats and 44 Republicans. The House of Representatives had 267 Democrats and 167 Republicans. During the 105th Congress (1997–1999), the Senate had 45 Democrats and 55 Republicans, while the House of Representatives had 207 Democrats and 227 Republicans. In the 106th Congress (1999–2001), the Senate still had 45 Democrats and 55 Republicans, but the House of Representatives had 211 Democrats and 223 Republicans.

SOURCE: *The World Almanac and Book of Facts 2000*. © 1999, PRIMEDIA Reference, Inc.

1. In 1992, which party had the majority in the House of Representatives?

2. In 1997, which party had the majority in the Senate? _____

3. During which session of Congress did the Democrats control both Houses?

4. In what year did Republican control of both Houses begin? _____

- B. Extra Challenge! Each party has a platform. A platform is the set of policies that the party says it stands for. Make up your own political party. Imagine you are running for student government at your school. What would you do if you were elected? How would you make things better? That is your platform. Write your party's name and platform. If you need more room, use the back of this page.**

Building Skills

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Comparing the Leaders of Congress

- A. Below are some facts about the Speaker of the House and the President of the Senate. Circle the two jobs that are alike for both leaders of Congress.

Speaker of the House

- 1) decides who will study each bill
- 2) decides who may speak before the House
- 3) decides when a person may speak before the House
- 4) decides how House rules are to be put to use
- 5) decides when a vote should be taken on a bill
- 6) is a member of the House of Representatives
- 7) is a member of the majority party

President of the Senate

- 1) decides who may speak before the Senate
- 2) decides when a vote should be taken on a bill
- 3) is Vice President of the United States
- 4) is not a member of the Senate
- 5) votes only when needed to break a tie

- B. Finish the chart below to show how the two jobs are different. Under Speaker of the House, write the duties that only the Speaker has. Under President of the Senate, write the duties that only the President of the Senate has.

Speaker of the House

President of the Senate

- C. Look at the chart. Who has more power, the Speaker of the House or the President of the Senate? Include at least two facts to support your answer. Use a separate sheet of paper for your answer.

Challenge

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Read the following article.

In 1924, a girl was born to a poor African American family in Brooklyn, New York. She was smart and hardworking. She went to college and became a teacher. She ran ten day-care centers in New York City. Those who knew Shirley Chisholm saw that she was strong and spirited.

In Chisholm's day, very few African Americans or women went into government. One day, a young African American woman asked Chisholm to run for government office. She and her friends had gathered \$9.62 to help. They would work every Friday night to get Chisholm elected. Chisholm decided to run as a New York Democrat.

In 1969, Chisholm became the first African American woman to be elected to the U.S. House of Representatives. At first, the leaders in Congress told Chisholm she had to be on the Agriculture Committee. Chisholm said no. She knew nothing about farms. She wanted to be on the Education and Labor Committee. That was where she could do the most good for the people she represented. Chisholm won that fight, too. By the time she left Congress in 1983, she had helped to pass many laws that helped schools in the United States.

A. Use the article above to answer the questions. Use a separate sheet of paper if you need more room.

1. Who is this story about? _____
2. What do you think is most special about Shirley Chisholm? _____
3. Which house of Congress did Chisholm get elected to? _____
4. What political party did she belong to? _____
5. Name the two committees mentioned in this story. Tell what they do.

B. Why did Shirley Chisholm insist on being on the Education and Labor Committee? Write your answer on a separate sheet of paper.

